
CIRM ANNOUNCES FIRST "REQUEST FOR APPLICATION"

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ICOC Approves CIRM Training Program for California's Universities, Non-Profit Academic and Research Institutions

EMERYVILLE, CA — The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) announced its first Request for Application (RFA) on May 13. The CIRM Training Program will fund pre-doctoral students, post-doctoral students, and clinical fellows in California's universities, non-profit academic and research institutions in stem cell research. The Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC) approved the CIRM Training Program by a unanimous vote during the May 6 ICOC meeting in Fresno.

Each California institution planning to apply for a CIRM Training Grant must send a letter of intent by June 1, 2005 and full applications must be received by July 1, 2005. The Grants Working Group is expected to formally review the CIRM Training Grants applications in August with final recommendations to come before the ICOC for funding at the September or October meeting.

The CIRM aims to commit approximately \$45 million over the next three years to its Training Program, with awards to up to 18 institutions and training for up to 200 CIRM Scholars at any given time. Funds for the first grants are expected to come from interim financing for the CIRM, to be discussed at the next Finance Committee Meeting sometime in June. "We are excited to issue our first call for grant applications. The initial emphasis on training is appropriate since the large increase in stem cell research that will occur under Proposition 71 will require a major expansion in the number of highly trained stem cell researchers in California," said Interim President Zach Hall, Ph.D. "CIRM Training Grants are intended to encourage institutions to foster comprehensive, in-depth training programs to bring together basic scientists and clinicians."

Three types of training programs will operate on a graduated scale to accommodate small and large institutions across the state:

- Comprehensive training program will educate at the pre-doctoral, post-doctoral and clinical levels. A Type I institutional grant will support up to 16 CIRM Scholars and operate on a total budget of up to \$1.25 million per year.
- Intermediate training program will offer training at two of the three levels of education mentioned above. Type II grants may support up to ten CIRM Scholars at a given institution with a total budget of \$800,000.
- Specialized training program will fund up to six CIRM Scholars at a total budget of \$500,000.

Each institution is expected to offer a single, integrated program appropriate for the educational level of its trainees and the expertise of its faculty. All programs will be required to offer at least one course in stem cell biology and disease and a course in the social, legal and ethical implications of stem cell research. The RFA is designed to educate students from scientifically diverse backgrounds—including the relevant fields of biology, clinical training programs, bioengineering, as well as ethics and the law. The RFA explicitly seeks institutions that will promote interaction among trainees from different fields, especially those trained in basic science and clinical medicine. Because of the diversity of the California population, CIRM is particularly interested in training a diverse pool of investigators, including under-represented minorities, as CIRM Scholars and Mentors.

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